

OPERA PACIFIC

presents

May 17th at 7³⁰

May 19th at 7³⁰

May 21 at 7³⁰

May 22 at 2pm

La Traviata

Composed by Giuseppe Verdi.

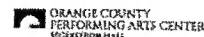


SNEAK PREVIEW

May 15, 2005 – 2 PM

Orange County Performing Arts Center

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Karl and Conny Bergstrom, Bergstroms Childrens Stores



OPERA PACIFIC

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WELCOME!

Welcome to our production of Verdi's opera of intense love and loss, *La Traviata*. Famous all over the world and a permanent fixture in popular opera houses, *La Traviata* is celebrated as our fourth opera of the 2004-2005 season. Conducted by John DeMain and directed by Amy Hutchinson, our *La Traviata* stars soprano Dina Kuznetsova Toliver as Violetta and Garrett Sorenson as Alfredo.

This Study Guide has been specially designed for you to enhance your enjoyment and appreciation of this classic Verdi opera. You will discover a variety of interesting articles and background information on the story and composer. You will also find questions and activities meant to engage your mind and enhance your opera-going experience.

When you are at the theater, please feel free to stop by our Opera Pacific Opera Shop located at the Orchestra level of the theater. There you will find a wide selection of books, recordings, souvenirs and additional opera-related materials for young people.

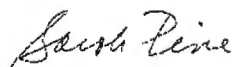
We love to hear from our patrons. Your letters of support help us sustain our Sneak Preview program as an outreach service to the community. We encourage all youths attending to complete any of the activities in this booklet. Your involvement and participation is key to the success of this program.

Please send letters, comments and completed activities to:

**Opera Pacific
Attn: Sarah Pine
600 W. Warner Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92707**

You can also email materials to studentpreview@operapacific.org.

See you at the opera!



Sarah Pine
Education Coordinator
Opera Pacific

OPERA PACIFIC

presents

La Traviata

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

Based on the novel, *La dame aux Camelias*, by Alexandre Dumas *fils*

SETTING: Paris, mid-18th century

ACT I – Violetta's Salon

ACT II Scene 1– Violetta and Alfredo's Country Home

ACT II Scene 2 – Flora's House

ACT III – Violetta's Bedroom



CAST

(in order of appearance)

Violetta Valéry, a courtesan
Gastone, Alfredo's friend
Alfredo Germont
Baron Douphol, Violetta's protector
Flora, Violetta's friend
Marchese D'Obigny, Flora's friend
Annina, Violetta's maid
Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father
Dr. Grenvil
Messenger

Soprano
Tenor
Tenor
Baritone
Mezzo Soprano
Bass
Soprano
Baritone
Bass
Baritone

Meet the Cast



Dina Kuznetsova
Violetta
Opera Pacific: Debut

Recent Productions: Gilda, *Rigoletto* (Boston Lyric Opera); Musetta, *La Bohème* (San Francisco Opera); Giulietta, *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* (English National Opera); Rodelinda, *Rodelinda* (München SO); Donna Anna, *Don Giovanni* (Berlin UDL); Adina, *L'elisir d'amore* (Berlin UDL)

Upcoming Productions: Gilda, *Rigoletto* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Violetta, *La Traviata* (Boston Lyric Opera)



Garrett Sorenson
Alfredo
Opera Pacific: Debut

Recent Productions: Cassio, *Otello* (Metropolitan Opera); Lensky, *Eugene Onegin* (Boston Lyric Opera); Arbace, *Idomeneo* (Houston Grand Opera); Shepherd, *Tristan und Isolde* (Metropolitan Opera); Edgardo di Ravenswood, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Portland, ME)

Upcoming Productions: Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni* (Houston Grand Opera); Sam Kaplan, *Street Scene* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis)



Ashley Holland
Germont
Opera Pacific: *Madame Butterfly* (2004)

Recent Productions: Ford, *Falstaff* (English National Opera, Dresden SSO); Don Carlo, *Ernani* (English National Opera); Enrico Ashton, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Chicago Opera); Amfortas, *Parsifal* (Graz Buehnen); Ivo, *La Vera Storia* (Hamburg SO); Count di Luna, *Il Trovatore* (Houston Grand Opera)



Stephanie Woodling
Flora
Opera Pacific: *Madame Butterfly* (2004); *Dead Man Walking* (2002); *Don Giovanni* (2002); *Little Women* (2001); *Carmen* (2001); *The Magic Flute* (2000)

Recent Productions: Artist in Residence (New York City Opera); Stephano, *Romeo et Juliette* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City); Cherubino, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Walton Arts Center); Suzy, *La Rondine* (Caramoor); Jenny Hildebrand, *Street Scene* (Chautauqua Opera); Die Zweite Dienerin, *Die Agyptische Helena* (Santa Fe Opera); Mrs. Segstrom, *A Little Night Music* (Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera)



Scott Wyatt
Gastone
Opera Pacific: Debut

Recent Productions: Zweite Jude, *Salome* (Bastille Paris); Young Servant, *Elektra* (Pittsburgh Opera); Mitch, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Austin Lyric Opera); Max, *Der Freischütz* (Schlossfestspiele Zwingenberg)

Upcoming Productions: Long Beach Symphony, Roanoke Opera



Jamie Offenbach
Marchese D'Obigny
Opera Pacific: *Salome* (2003); *Abduction from the Seraglio* (2003); *Rigoletto* (2001); *La Traviata* (1999)

Recent Productions: Raimondo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Los Angeles Opera); Bartolo, *Marriage of Figaro* (Los Angeles Opera); First Soldier, *Samome* (Los Angeles Opera); Billy Jackrabbit, *La Fanciulla del West* (Los Angeles Opera); *La Traviata* (LA Philharmonic/Hollywood Bowl); Leporello, *Don Giovanni* (Michigan Opera Theatre); Colline, *La Bohème* (Opera Carolina)

Upcoming Productions: Basilio, *The Barber of Seville* (Toledo Opera); Mikado, *The Mikado* (Hawaii Opera Theatre); Mustafa, *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Santa Barbara Opera)

Meet the Cast



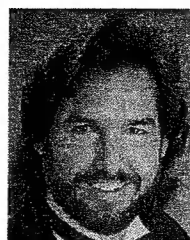
Todd Robinson

Dr. Grenvil

Opera Pacific: *The Barber of Seville* (2003); *Dead Man Walking* (2002)

Recent Productions: Frère Laurent, *Romeo et Juliette* (Sacramento Opera); Leporello, *Don Giovanni* (West Bay Opera), Dr Bartolo (cover), *The Barber of Seville* (San Francisco Opera)

Upcoming Productions: Alidoro, *La Cenerentola* (Arizona Opera); Haly, *Italiana in Algeri* (Opera Pacific)



Charles Austin

Baron Douphol

Opera Pacific: *Dead Man Walking* (2002); *Rigoletto* (2001); *The Flying Dutchman* (1999)

Recent Productions: Rocco, *Fidelio* (Norfolk); Angelotti, *Tosca* (Washington DC Opera); Mephistopheles, *Mephistopheles* (Bob Jones University); King Marke, *Tristan und Isolde* (Virginia Opera); George Benton, *Dead Man Walking* (Pittsburgh Opera)



Susan Nicely

Annina

Opera Pacific: Debut

Recent Productions: Governess, *Pique Dame* (Dallas Opera); Mrs. Ott, *Susannah* (Chicago Opera); Mamma Lucia, *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Chicago Opera)

Upcoming Productions: Housekeeper, *The Silent Woman* (Long Beach Opera); Berta, *The Barber of Seville* (Toledo Opera)



Kevin St. Clair

Giuseppe

Opera Pacific: *Turandot*, *Madame Butterfly*

Recent Productions: Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Washington Opera, Ash Lawn-Highland Opera); Bushy, *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Washington Opera); Don Ramiro, *La Cenerentola* (San Diego Opera Ensemble, Ash Lawn-Highland Opera); Rodolfo, *La Bohème* (San Diego Opera Ensemble); Count Almaviva, *The Barber of Seville* (Redlands Bowl); Alfred, *Die Fledermaus* (Natchez Opera Festival); Nemorino, *L'elisir d'amore* (Los Angeles Guild Opera); Janacek, *From the House of the Dead*, Purcell, *The Indian Queen* (Long Beach Opera)

Upcoming productions: Coronation Mass, Mozart (Los Angeles Master Chorale); Kantrimuisik, Kagel (Ojai Music Festival)



James Martin Schaefer

Messenger

Opera Pacific: Debut

Recent Productions: Papageno, *The Magic Flute*, Sid, *Albert Herring*, Mandarin, *Turandot* (Hollywood Bowl Orchestra); *Les Noces*, Stravinsky, *Cantata Misericordium*, Britten, *Creation*, Haydn, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Vaughan Williams, *Chichester Psalms*, Bernstein, *Requiem*, Howell, *Requiem*, Fauré, *Jepthe*, Carissimi



John DeMain

Conductor

Opera Pacific: Artistic Director and Principal Conductor since 1998

Positions: Music Director/Principal Conductor Houston Grand Opera (1980-1998); Music Director Madison Symphony Orchestra (Current); Artistic Advisor Madison Opera (Current)

The Story of La dame aux Camélias,

by Alexandre Dumas, fils

Author Alexandre Dumas *fils*, son of the author of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, had an affair with courtesan Marie Dulpessis. Not much later, she died (at the age of 23) of tuberculosis, then called "consumption," the most commonly deadly disease in the 19th century. Dumas blended his own story of Marie with another one of her relationships to a man named Agenor, whose father disapproved of his relations to Miss Dulpessis. He created a novel where an idealized courtesan named Marguerite Gautier, who loves camellias, proves to be more loving and generous than the hero's father. The story became hugely popular under the title *La Dame aux camélias* (or in English, *Camille*).



The story argues that a good heart is more important than propriety, that the social distinctions which split the "beau monde" (high society) from the "demimonde" (the sensual members of the middle class) are cruel and hypocritical, and that true love must triumph over all. Dumas is expressing the romantic notion that the highest virtue in a human being is a good heart.

In Paris in the 1800s, respectable families would not want to be associated with another family in which one of the members was entangled with a courtesan. It is this stereotype of a courtesan that Dumas set himself to break. The novel is a commentary on the complexity of moral attitudes during the time and the result was wildly popular.

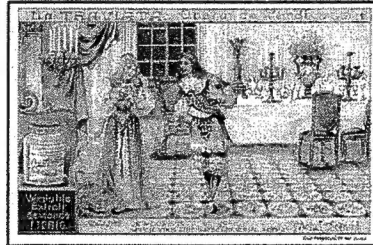
In 1853, one year after Dumas dramatized his work, Verdi turned the story into one of the most popular operas ever written. He retained the Parisian setting but changed the heroine's name to an Italian one: Violetta. The Italians were considerably more conservative than the French, so Verdi removed some of the scenes from the original play and made Violetta an almost angelic creature whose self-contempt and fear of risking love is almost incomprehensible.



The Opera – La Traviata

ACT I – A salon in Violetta's house in Paris.

At a party, courtesan Violetta Valéry and friends greet their guests, among whom is Alfredo Germont, a young man who has loved Violetta from afar for some time. Alfredo's friend Gastone informs Violetta of Alfredo's love for her and she takes the news lightly. Eventually all sit down to supper and Violetta calls for a toast. A band in an adjoining room starts up a succession of waltzes and the guests prepare to dance, but Violetta is seized by a coughing fit and begs the others to go on without her. Alfredo remains behind and warns Violetta that her way of life will kill her if she persists. He offers to protect her and confesses his love for her. Violetta protests that love means nothing to her, telling him he will soon forget her. But his sincerity moves her and she promises to meet him the next day. The dance music returns as Violetta playfully gives Alfredo a flower, telling him to return when it has faded. Left alone, Violetta muses fondly of her new conquest. But she shrugs off her sentimental thoughts, reminding herself that she wants freedom. She resolves that a life of pleasure is her only choice.



ACT II Scene 1 – A country house near Paris.

Some months later Violetta and Alfredo are living together in a country house outside Paris. Annina, their maid, enters to inform Alfredo that Violetta has been selling her jewelry to finance their life together. Alfredo is shocked to learn of the situation and leaves immediately for the city to raise money for their household.

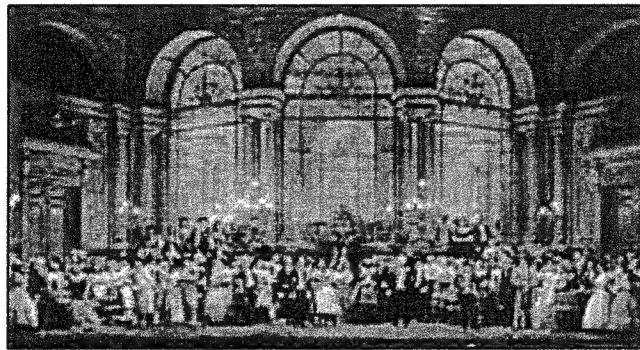
While he is gone, Violetta receives an invitation to a party that evening from her friend Flora. She reminisces about her former life, but she has no intention of attending the party. Alfredo's father Giorgio Germont arrives unexpectedly and requests that Violetta give up her relationship with his son, claiming that it will soon damage the family's reputation. Alfredo's sister is soon to marry and Giorgio worries the scandal will threaten the wedding. Violetta reveals her serious illness to Giorgio and protests that Alfredo is all she has. But Giorgio is adamant and assures Violetta that she will find others to love. Eventually, Violetta capitulates and agrees to leave Alfredo, exacting a promise from Germont to reveal their discussion to Alfredo after her death.

Violetta writes a note to Flora accepting the invitation to the party. Then as she composes a farewell letter to Alfredo he returns. He is disturbed by her agitation, but her only response to his questions is a passionate declaration of her love as she rushes out. Germont appears and attempts to convince Alfredo to give up his life with Violetta and return to the family.

A messenger delivers Violetta's farewell note to Alfredo, who believes she has betrayed him and returned to her old life in Paris. Furious, he vows revenge and leaves to confront her at Flora's party.

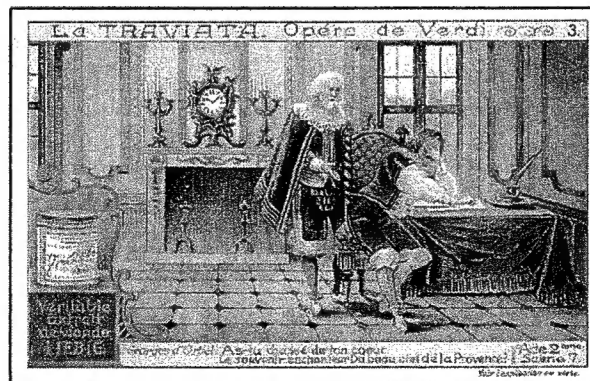
ACT II Scene 2 – A salon in Flora's townhouse.

At the party that evening Flora and her new lover discuss the separation of Violetta and Alfredo. Soon Alfredo enters making bitter comments about love and begins playing recklessly at cards. He appears uncaring when Violetta arrives on the arm of Baron Douphol. As Alfredo and the Baron bet against each other with barely concealed hostility, Violetta repeatedly grieves her position. Dinner is served, and Violetta manages to see Alfredo privately. She begs him to leave for fear of further confrontation, and in answer to his accusations she claims that she now loves the Baron. Alfredo calls the guests together, and in his rising fury, denounces Violetta and throws his winnings in her face as 'payment' for their time together. Violetta faints in the arms of Flora and Dr. Grenvil. Giorgio enters in search of Alfredo and denounces his son's behavior, yet keeps the truth about Violetta's true love and illness a secret.



ACT III – Violetta's bedroom.

Dr. Grenvil tells Annina that her mistress is near death. Alone, Violetta reads a letter from Giorgio Germont, telling her that he has revealed the truth of her sacrifice to Alfredo, who is now on his way to beg her forgiveness. She has little hope that he will arrive in time. She bids farewell to the past and to life. Alfredo arrives and the lovers mask the thought of her death by singing of the future and a life together away from Paris. Violetta decides that she and Alfredo should go to church to celebrate his return, but the strain of getting to her feet is too much and she repeatedly falls back. Giorgio appears with Dr. Grenvil and Violetta is seized with a sudden rush of life, but then collapses and dies at her lover's feet.



The Life of Giuseppe Verdi

One of Italy's Most Loved Heroes

Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi is considered the greatest composer of Italian opera. His work was very popular during his lifetime and remains popular today.



Verdi was born at Le Roncole on October 10th, 1813; his father was an innkeeper, his mother a spinner. As a young boy he showed talent for music and when he needed work done on his piano, harpsichord maker Cavalletti repaired Verdi's instrument for free, "seeing the good disposition of young Giuseppe Verdi for learning to play this instrument."

The foundations of musical composition and instrumental playing were taught to him by Ferdinando Provesi, maestro of the local Philharmonic society, but his advanced training took place in Milan. He frequented the theatres in Milan, getting to know the operatic repertoire of his time.

In 1838, the leading European musical editor Giovanni Ricordi bought his copyrights and this business would last for the rest of his life, passing through the generations of Ricordi's family, with Tito and Giulio Ricordi being considered as part of his family.

His first real success was *Nabucco* in 1842, revealing Verdi's true talent in all its glory. *Nabucco* premiered at La Scala theatre, with Giuseppina Strepponi, soprano, in the part of Abigaille. The singer became his mistress and, long after the death of his first wife, Verdi would marry her.

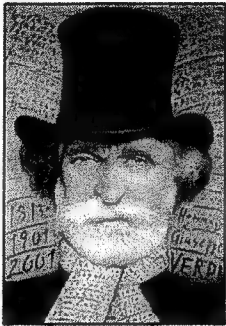
By the age of thirty-four Verdi was already internationally famous: his operas were performed in all the theatres in the world, and new ones were commissioned by the most important Italian opera houses. *La Traviata*, which premiered in La Fenice, Venice on March 6th, 1853, was built on individual human dimensions, in this case a heroine, a courtesan who offers herself in sacrifice to the hypocritical conventions of the society in which she lives. In this opera the action is linear and develops in an increasingly intense rhythm.

Verdi's works happened to have some resonance with Italian nationalism, specifically the song "Va' Pensiero" in *Nabucco* (which still in modern times has repeatedly been proposed as a possible Italian national anthem).

He died of a stroke on January 27th, 1901 in Milan after the completion of his "Casa di Riposo," a retirement villa for poor artists. His funeral was extremely well attended, and a quarter of a million mourners were present to show their respect to one of the most important figures in Italian music. The ever-increasing fame of his works is alive and well today and as popular as ever on the stages of the entire world.

The Music of *La Traviata*

Overall, Verdi's operas are a masterpiece of orchestration, melody and dramatic construction within musical format. Verdi's operas are well known throughout the world. He contained the great skill - shared only by Mozart, Puccini, and a few other greats - of balancing the lives of his characters and their individual personalities against the often overwhelming aspects of opera. His Italian nature commanded works of great passion, and one is often moved to laughter and tears within the same act of an opera.

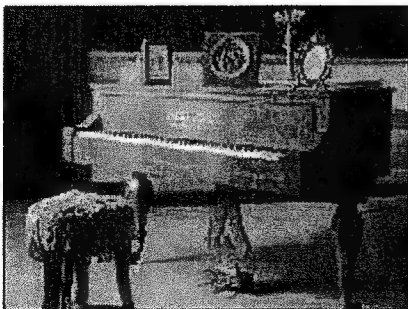


Opera is drama set to music, and both are important. The melodies of arias (solos), the complex interweaving of contrasting melodies in duets and trios, and the rousing harmonies of choruses are the very heart and soul of opera. Emotional raptures that might seem exaggerated in the theater are brought to life by music.

La Traviata is an intensely moving story, where the music and action push on together. This opera contains a spectacular ballet in the second act, in which Spanish gypsies perform a dance combining the themes of passion, money, and death, which run throughout *La Traviata*. It is crucial not to get so wrapped up in following the plot that you don't pay attention to the music. This is, above all, one of the most glorious musical compositions produced in the Romantic era, filled with memorable melodies, duets, and choruses.

La Traviata is perfumed with arias and soaring choruses that vividly depict the ravishingly decadent but glamorous world of Parisian high society as the background to a heart-rending story of romantic happiness destroyed.

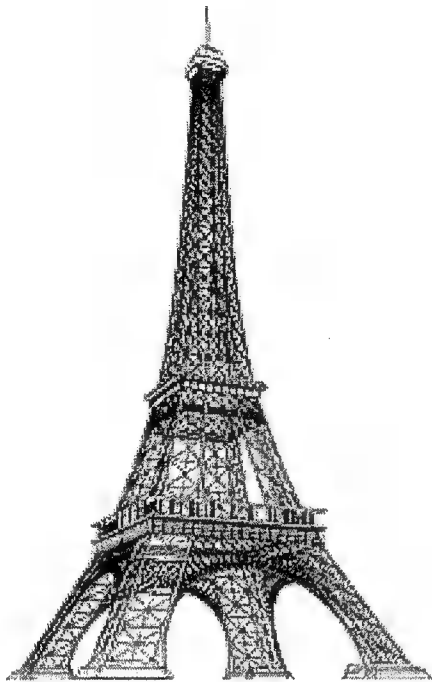
Audiences will immediately recognize many of the musical numbers. The famous "Brindisi," or "Drinking Song" and "Sempre libera" are frequently featured in commercials and movies.



Chronological List of Verdi's Operas

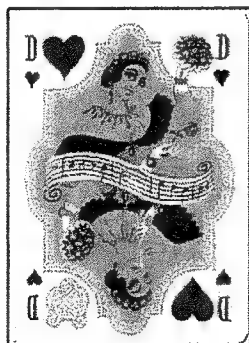
Oberto Conte di San Bonifacio	1839	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Un Giorno di Regno	1840	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Nabucco	1842	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata	1843	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Ernani	1844	Teatro la Fenice, Venice
I Due Foscari	1844	Teatro Argentina, Rome
Giovanna d'Arco	1845	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Alzira	1845	Teatro San Carlo, Naples
Attila	1846	Teatro la Fenice, Venice
Macbeth	1847	Teatro della Pergola, Florence
I Masnadieri	1847	Her Majesty's Theatre, London
Jérusalem	1847	Académie Royale de Musique, Paris
Il Corsaro	1848	Teatro Grande, Trieste
La Battaglia di Legnano	1849	Teatro Argentina, Rome
Luisa Miller	1849	Teatro San Carlo, Naples
Stiffelio	1850	Teatro Grande, Trieste
Rigoletto	1850	Teatro la Fenice, Venice
Il Trovatore	1853	Teatro Apollo, Rome
La Traviata	1853	Teatro la Fenice, Venice
Les Vêpres Siciliennes	1855	Académie Impériale de Musique, Paris
Simon Boccanegra	1857	Teatro la Fenice, Venice
Aroldo	1857	Teatro Nuovo, Rimini
Un Ballo in Maschera	1859	Teatro Apollo, Rome
La Forza del Destino	1862	Bolshoi Theatre, St. Petersburg
Don Carlos	1867	Académie Impériale de Musique, Paris
Aïda	1871	Opera House, Cairo
Otello	1887	Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Falstaff	1893	Teatro alla Scala, Milan

19th century Parisian Culture & the Courtesan



Paris culture in the 1800s was bustling, the old hereditary aristocracy and the “nouveau riche” of Paris mixed socially and developed into the new upper class. Wealthy Parisian citizens of the nineteenth century, always well dressed, spent much of their time supporting the arts by attending concerts and opera houses. Upper class families attended the Paris opera regularly. In the 1800s, Paris was much like New York City is today, on the forefront of culture and development. Many new jobs were created to support the growing industry, construction, and military, and this explosion resulted in a substantial and eventually dominant middle class.

Parisian women would be seen more and more in public as the century progressed. The 1830s brought more color, tighter waistlines, shorter skirts and large-brimmed hats and bonnets into fashion. Many women would attempt to entice and entertain men who were of a royal court or of high social standing for money and association. These women were considered **courtesans**.



The libretto of *La Traviata* is based on a true story about Alexander Dumas *fils* and famous Parisian courtesan Marie Duplessis' affair between September 1844 and August 1845. In the novel *La Dame aux Camelias* by Alexandre Dumas, the author transforms himself into Armand Duval and Marie Duplessis into Marguerite Gautier.

Verdi and Puccini



Giuseppe Verdi is the premiere Italian composer, considered the best by many and celebrated by opera lovers all over the world. His successor, Giacomo Puccini followed in Verdi's footsteps, attaining a similar position as a true master of opera.



Born in Lucca, Italy in 1858, **Puccini** began his career as a church organist, but became inspired to compose opera after walking 13 miles to see a performance of Verdi's *Aida* in 1876. He studied at the Milan conservatory and began his career in 1884. He was not an instant success, but considered a poor student and, unlike Verdi, was not a child prodigy. Puccini had to work hard, but his passion fueled his drive and he eventually attained greatness. Through trials and failures, Puccini learned well from his mistakes and held tight to the essentials of opera. His hard work certainly paid off.

Some of Puccini's most famous operas are: *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, and *Turandot*—which was left unfinished due to his death in 1924. He is known as the last of the great opera composers.



Verdi's unprecedented popularity during his lifetime extends to the present—not a day passes without a Verdi opera being performed somewhere in the world.

Verdi transformed Italian opera; building on its traditions to develop a new dramatic coherence that helped lay the foundations for modern lyric drama. He inherently knew opera, as if it was his native language, and in his most productive years, he became incapable of writing an inferior opera. He infused them with deeper characterization, new orchestral sonorities, fresh vocal styles, and plot-driven dramatic urgency. A man of the theater, Verdi possessed an innate sense of dramatic immediacy and how to communicate with audiences—and this is reflected clearly in his operas.

There are some who say that Italian opera would have died altogether had Puccini not been able to pick up where Verdi left off. Indeed opera would have ended in Italy with Verdi if there had been no Puccini, as the works of lesser known composers such as Mascagni, Ponchielli, and Leoncavallo were not strong enough to sustain the tradition. It was the genius of Giacomo Puccini that brought Italian opera into the 20th century before its final surrender to the works of the German Wagner, the Russians Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky, and the French Massenet and Bizet. Just as Verdi was able to rescue a great national heritage from impending lethargy, so too did Puccini protect opera, a beloved part of Italian culture from the time of Monteverdi, from coming to a premature close.

Verdi Music in the Movies

Music From *La Traivata*:

The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement-
"Sempre Libera"



Rat Race – "Libiamo ne'lieti calici"



Midsummer Night's Dream – "Libiamo ne'lieti
calici"



Mrs. Dalloway – "Addio, del passato"



Pretty Woman – "Dammi tu forza, o cielo"



The Importance of Being Earnest – "Libiamo
ne'lieti calici"



Music From *Rigoletto*:

The Family Man – "La donna è mobile"



Analyze This – "La donna è mobile"



The Burbs – "Questa o quella"



Music From *Il Trovatore*:

Babe: Pig in the City – "Anvil Chorus"

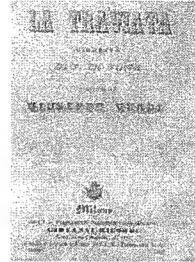
D2: The Mighty Ducks – "Anvil Chorus"



Verdi & *La Traviata* Facts/Stats

The main themes of the opera are the earthly and heavenly sides of love, death, sin and salvation. *La Traviata* is considered to be one of the best of Verdi's operas, with the most realistic scenario. It had its premiere in 1853, in Venice. Only a year later the opera achieved success with a slightly changed libretto and famous singers. Today *La Traviata* is considered one of the masterpieces of the operatic world and it belongs to the permanent repertoire of famous opera theatres.

The word "traviata" is variously translated in the operatic literature as "the wayward one" or "the straying one."



For many years Verdi believed his birthday to be October 9, 1814 because "this is what his mother had told him" and claiming that only after seeing the baptismal record in 1876 did he realize he was both a day younger and a year older than he had supposed. His real birthday is October 10, 1813.

Verdi's librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, first studied to become a priest, then a journalist, before writing operas.



Francesco Maria Piave



Verdi loved animals, especially a small Maltese dog named Lulu, who was part of the family and traveled on their trips throughout Europe. Lulu was even given a passport for a trip to St. Petersburg.

At age 18, Verdi traveled to Milan to study at the prestigious Conservatory of Music, but flunked the entrance exam.

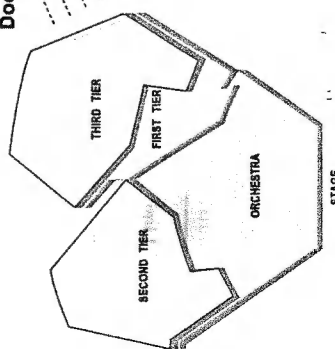
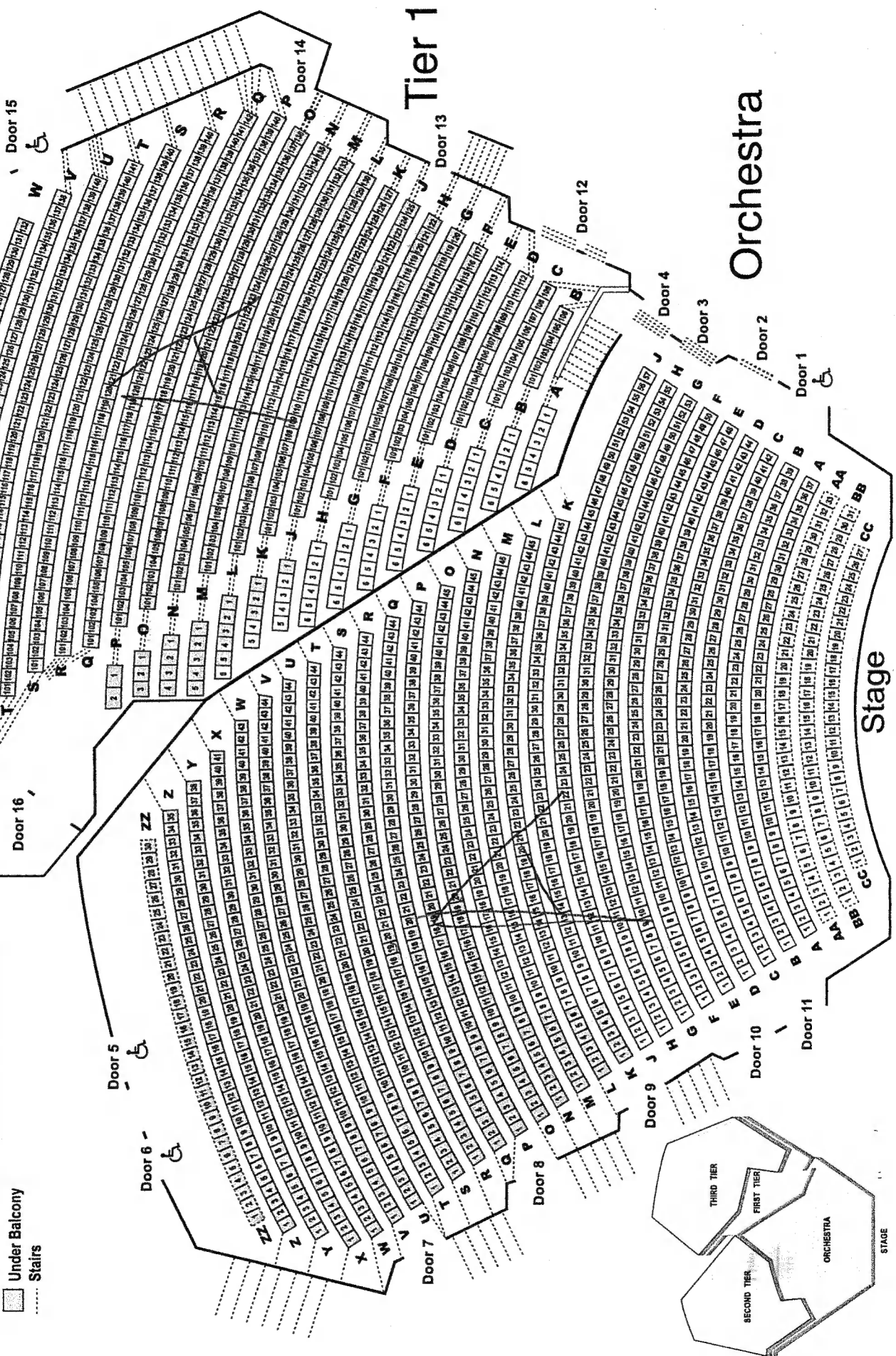
Verdi's surname is the acronym of "Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia" (Victor Emmanuel King of Italy). Clandestine partisans started plotting to have this King of Sardinia conquer Milan and, due to severe Austrian censorship, this campaign was conventionally called "Viva VERDI" (The phrase means 'Long live Victor Emanuele, king of Italy'). The composer was aware of this use of his name and is supposed to have consented.

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-  Under Balcony
-  Stairs

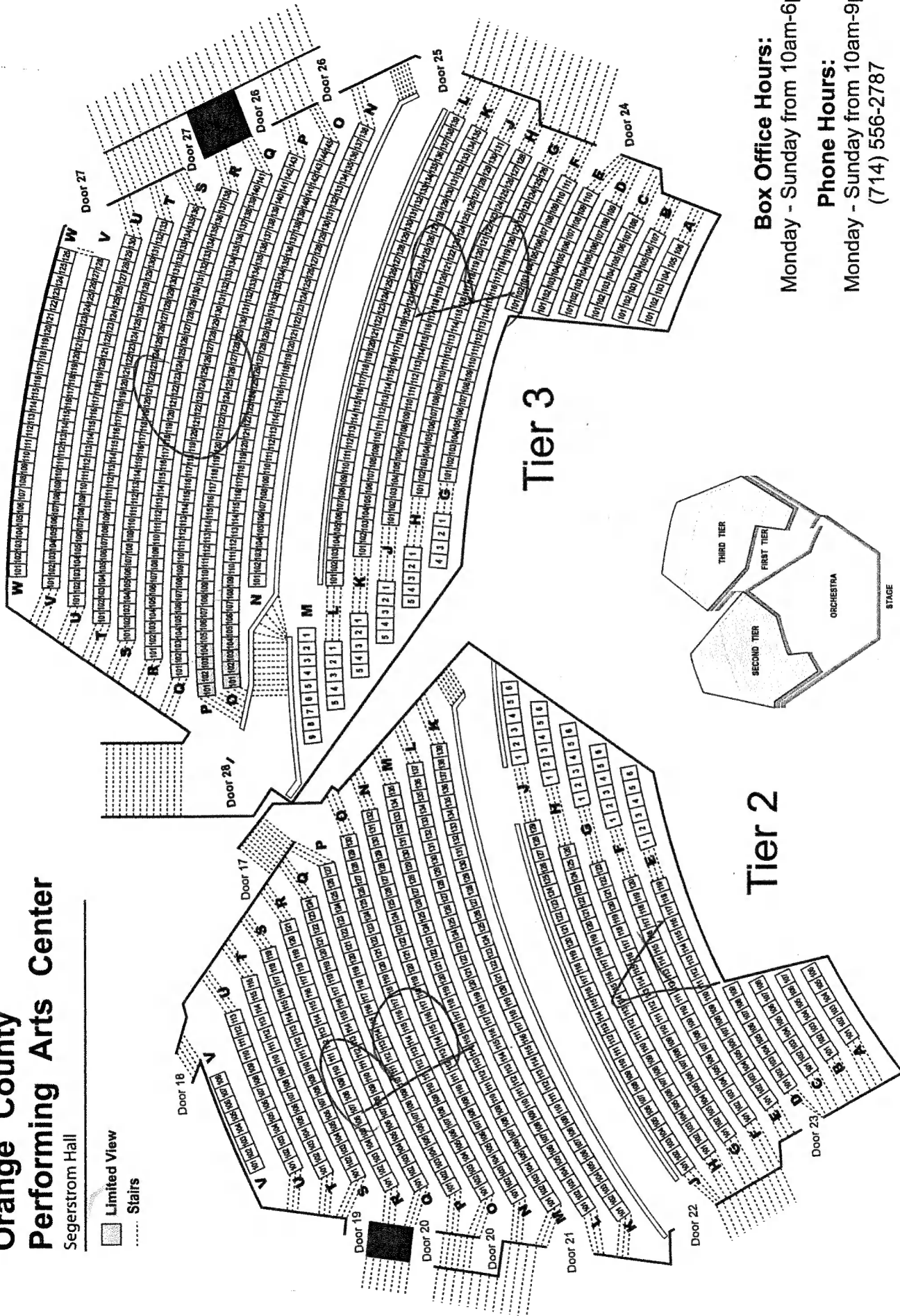
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